728
10/ The Bolshevik regime took away the independence of the Belorussian nation by force. The region was first occupied by the Germans, and in 1919 and 1920 it became the arena of the savage and devastating Soviet-Polish War which came to an end only in November , 1920. The peace treaty which the Soviets and the Poles signed in Riga was tragic for Belorussia. In it a nation of eighteen million(1) was dismembered into three parts:

1. According to other estimates the Belorussian nation at that time numbered not 18 but 20 and even 24 million persons.

about four million /2/ Belorussians were given by the Bolsheviks to Poland who, during her existence as a state tried, rashly but unsuccessfully, by every kind of intolerable method to turn Belorussians into Poles and Catholics. The Communist dictatorship was established over the remaining Belorussian territory. But even that remaining under the Communists was subdivided into two parts. Out of the six uyezds of the former Minskaya Guberniya (1) the Belorussian Soviet

1. The six uyezds of the former Minskaya Guberniya comprised the Minskoy, Borisovskiy, Igumenskiy, Bobrugskiy, Slutskiy, and Mozyrskiy uyezd.

Socialist Republic (B. S. S. R.) was organized. The Vitebskaya, Mogilevskaya, and newly organized Gomel'skaya Guberniya remained included in Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic
●648 (R. S. F. S. R.). The six uyezds of the B. S. S. R. represented a very convenient base for the postwar struggle with Poland. Starting in the very first days after the conclusion of peace with Poland, the Soviets used every means to try and arouse discontent and alarm among the population, especially the Belorussians, who had been left in the power of Poland. The Soviets also attempted to undermine the Polish economy which was rather weak. To this end armed units of the G. P. U. were organized in the border regions of Belorussia and sent into Western Belorussia. These units plundered and burned estates, murdered and executed policemen and government officials. A certain Mukha, the leader of one of these units, was particularly renowned. These "insurgents" always had a place of

648 refuge on Soviet territory, and meanwhile Soviet propaganda interpreted the "exploits" of Mukha and other units as the anger of the Belorussians nation against capitalist Poland. From the B. S. S. R. special propagandistic literature was sent into western Belorussia, as were Communists prepared for underground work who carried on propaganda there as well as organizing Communist and Komsomol cells. Nor did the Poles remain in their debt. They also organized units and forays into the territory of Soviet Belorussia where they ravaged the revisional committees and the village soviets, in some cases not disdaining to conduct pogroms of the Jews. The raids which were made upon the towns of Kopyl' and Koydanov in the Minskaya oblast' are well known . . .

668 The destructive war and the Bolshevik terror greatly weakened the national forces of Belorussia. A significant part of the active political workers who had taken part in the all-Belorussian Congress and in the further work of creating an independent National Republic were forced to emigrate across the border. /3/ Only a few individuals remained in Belorussia and their number was somewhat augmented by those who returned from the front. At the time, the national-democratic intellegentsia estimated the political situation correctly. The Kremlin and Poland were pursuing their own political ends, which were completely foreign to the interests of the Belorussian nation. Warsaw had set itself the goal of turning Belorussians into Poles in the shortest possible period. And Moscow had destined Belorussia to be a convenient ground for the preparation of its own specific measures towards the quickest possible Communist revolution in the West and as a first step in neighboring Poland. Belorussian national forces could not reconcile themselves to such a destiny for their country. Immediately after the Soviet-Polish War there were attempts to preserve their independence by armed force. The famous Slutskiy uprising broke out in the end of 1920; more than ten thousand fighters for freedom and liberty took part in it. The Slutskiy uprising was quelled by the overwhelming strength of the Red Army. Belorussia was then covered with a thick net of partisan units, some of which resisted until as late as 1930. A correct appraisal of the situation led the Belorussian national leaders to the decision to elect the path of lengthy, painstaking, and patient work within the B. S. S. R., involving the elevation of the national consciousness of the masses and the preparation of young cadres for active work. When the Bolsheviks were forced to give up

I INTRODUCTION

131 The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is situated on the western border of the U.S.S.R. between the upper and middle reaches of the Rivers Dnieper, Bug, and Western Dvina. The area of the Republic is about 89,000 square miles; and in October 1939 its population was estimated at 10,386,000 inhabitants; the capital city is Minsk. Approximately a quarter of the territory consists of valuable coniferous (pine and fir) and deciduous (oak and aspen) forests. The climate is mild and humid; and beneath the soil lie large deposits of peat, phosphorites, fire-proof, acid-proof and porcelain clay, marl, sand for glass making, and bituminous shale.

642 The B.S.S.R. was proclaimed on January 1, 1919. In 1922, together with the other Soviet Republics, it formed one of the constituent Republics of the U.S.S.R.

At the Republican level, its government consists of a Council of Ministers and the Byelorussian Supreme Soviet (the legislative assembly of the Republic). At the Federal level, it has representatives in the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., which is divided into two chambers having equal legislative power: the Soviet of Union elected on the basis of one member for every 300,000 of population; and the Soviet of Nationalities, elected on the basis of 25 deputies from each Union Republic, 11 from each Autonomous Republic, five from each Autonomous Region, and one deputy from each national area. Also at the Federal level are the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. - the highest organ of executive and administrative power - and the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R.

648 Each Republic has the right to enter into relations with foreign states and to conclude treaties with them; but foreign affairs concerning the interests of the Union as a whole are dealt with by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. Certain of the ministries - for example, the Ministry of Foreign Trade - are the exclusive prerogative of the Union Government. Others exist both at the Union level and in the individual republics; and a number exist only in the republics.

631 For administrative purposes the Byelorussian Republic is divided into thirteen "oblasts", or provinces, which in turn are subdivided into "raions", or counties. Oblasts and raions are not necessarily uniform in size and population, but vary according to the concentration of industry, or for administrative convenience.

871 Between its inception in 1919 and the outbreak of war in 1941, the B.S.S.R. had made substantial progress in all directions. Universal education had been introduced, and over a million children attended school. Before the war the Republic had 23 higher educational institutions, a large number of technical schools, and 30 scientific research institutes headed by the Academy of Science.

727 Reckoned in terms of 1941 state prices, the direct damage inflicted on the Byelorussian S.S.R. by the German military attack and the prolonged occupation has been placed at 75,000 million roubles (15,000 million U.S. dollars). This includes material losses due to destruction, damage, and plunder; and it represents 11 per cent. of the damage to the entire Soviet Union, which has been estimated at 679,000 million roubles.

The following table shows how Byelorussia's war damage has been assessed to the separate branches of the economy.

TABLE II

War Damage to the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic
(in million U.S. dollars)

Industry and building	1,263.84
Transport and communications	1,998.96
Housing and municipal economy	917.94
Agriculture	4,480.34
Commerce	141.22
Education	464.76
Arts	32.68
Public Health	122.12
State institutions	241.44
Co-operation	387.16
Public organizations	68.48
Religious communities	161.06
Personal property of citizens	4,720.00
Total	15,000.00

Note: Damage is estimated in terms of 1941 state prices: 75,000 million roubles, converted to dollars at the rate of 5 roubles equal one dollar. The present official rate is 5.40 roubles to the dollar.

Source: Statement by Mr. K.V. Kiselev, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Byelorussian S.S.R., published in the Soviet Monitor, London, February 8, 1947.

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648 The Request for UNRRA Assistance

Rehabilitation work in the B.S.S.R. commenced even before the war was ended. Great assistance was given by other areas of the U.S.S.R., but so many of the economically important regions of the Soviet Union had suffered destruction that the help which they could provide was limited.

Early in 1945 it became apparent that both Byelorussia and the Ukraine would need further external assistance if they were to carry on

727 the full tasks of rebuilding homes, restarting industry, and working their
648 farms once more. Therefore, in the summer of 1945 the Soviet Government applied to UNRRA for such assistance and strongly urged that 700 million U.S. dollars be allocated by the Administration for relief work in these two Republics. In August 1945 the Ukraine and Byelorussia were admitted to membership in UNRRA; and on December 18, 1945, after it was determined that they were not in a position to pay with foreign exchange for their own import requirements, agreements were signed between their governments and the Administration providing for the delivery of relief and rehabilitation supplies amounting to 250 million dollars - little more than one-third of the amount requested.

The UNRRA agreement with Byelorussia provided that 61 million dollars would be used to ship food, clothing, medical, agricultural, and industrial supplies to the B.S.S.R. The agreement also stipulated that UNRRA would attempt to deliver the bulk of these supplies to Byelorussia before June 30, 1946; however, because of procurement and transport difficulties, this proved impossible. On May 30, 1946, therefore, the UNRRA-Byelorussian agreement was extended to the end of 1946.

On April 19, 1946, a small UNRRA Mission arrived in Byelorussia and established headquarters at Minsk. The duties of the Mission were to handle problems connected with the delivery of UNRRA supplies, to work closely with the Byelorussian Government in ascertaining the needs of the people, and to observe the distribution of UNRRA supplies. As in all UNRRA countries, the Mission members have complete freedom of movement and observation.

Before the arrival of the Mission at Minsk, 29 ships carrying UNRRA cargoes had already landed at Soviet ports (from December 1945, when UNRRA shipments started, up to April 23, 1946). The Byelorussian Government estimated the tonnage received at 67,680 gross long tons, of which 58,000 tons were food; 3,939 tons, seeds; 3,905 tons, industrial materials; and 1,512 tons were clothing, soap, leather, tarpaulins, and rope. The government also reported that they had taken from the ports and distributed all but 22,000 tons of the supplies received by that time.

Members of the UNRRA Mission making initial observations reported efficient and equitable distribution of the supplies to those sections of the population which suffered most from the war. Practical use was being made of every scrap of material, and there was no evidence of waste. As at April 23, 1946, 40,000 gross long tons of food had been distributed among 12 regions and eight individual towns in Byelorussia. Eleven locomotives had been distributed to nine different points; industrial metals - copper, aluminium, and zinc - had been distributed in six of the war destroyed cities; and over 1,000 tons of seeds, to seven regions of the Republic.

648 It was in food supplies that UNRRA was making its greatest con-
262 tribution. In all the shops, UNRRA food constituted the bulk of the supplies; and apart from bread, cereals, and potatoes, over 90 per cent.

648 262 of the Byelorussian diet came from UNRRA sources. Meat supplies from domestic production were almost nil; fats and oils also were critically short; and little sugar was available, the Byelorussian sugar industry having been completely smashed.

Spring 1946: The Outlook

000 In Byelorussia, 1946 was expected to be a great year for recovery. The new Five Year Plan had just been adopted; UNRRA assistance was getting into full swing; and the relief supplies were filling a wide gap. The food situation was poor but, thanks to UNRRA help, not desperate. Material progress was being made; destroyed houses were being rebuilt, and farming and industry slowly restored.

121 The following sections of this report will try to tell a little of the story of Byelorussia before the war; indicate the damage inflicted by the German invaders and consider Byelorussian reconstruction as it progresses today.

Long Term Rehabilitation Plans

727 185 On March 18, 1946, the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. adopted a series of measures for the long-term rehabilitation of the Soviet Union. Incorporated in the fourth Five Year Plan (1946-1950), these measures were designed to rehabilitate the devastated regions of the country, to recover the pre-war level in industry and agriculture, and then considerably to surpass that level.

Included in the Plan are provisions for capital investments in the Byelorussian Republic of 6,950 million roubles in 1946-50;[1] of this 2,422 million roubles are to be spent for works under the jurisdiction of the Republic. While small in comparison to the 75,000 million roubles estimated war damage suffered by the B.S.S.R., this volume of capital investments is greater than the combined expenditures of 5,741 million made during the three pre-war Five Year Plans, (1928-42). Although some allowance must be made for the lower value of the rouble, the physical goals themselves are also greater.

The new plan contemplates great expansion, but no marked changes in the direction of Byelorussian economic development. Agricultural production is to be revived; and by 1950 the crop area is to be 5,300,000 hectares. Industrial plans for 1946-50 are largely centered in the development of electric power, and peat, brick and other building materials, all of which were well established before the war. One significant trend is toward the construction of more hydro-electric stations, which in 1950 will produce 12 per cent. of the total power,

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[1] Capital investments for the whole Soviet Union in 1946-50 are fixed at 250,300 million roubles.

IV UNRRA ASSISTANCE

648 In the original agreement between UNRRA and the Byelorussian Government was a provision that "within the limits of its resources" the Administration would strive to procure and deliver the full programme of 61 million U.S. dollars' worth of relief supplies for Byelorussia before July 1, 1946. In May 1946, however, when it became clear that the difficult world supply and transport situation would require at least an additional six months for the completion of deliveries, the UNRRA-Byelorussian agreement was extended to the end of the year. Even at the end of January 1947, the programme was not entirely completed as the following table shows.

TABLE XII

UNRRA Programme of Supplies for Byelorussia, Compared with Shipments to January 31, 1947

	Programme (U.S. dollars)	Shipments to January 31, 1947 (U.S. dollars)	(gross long tons)
Food	29,710,000	27,918,000	94,660
Clothing, textiles, footwear	7,015,000	7,009,000	5,346
Medical and sanitation	1,002,000	699,000	163
Agricultural rehabilitation	5,622,000	4,416,000	6,680
Industrial rehabilitation	17,351,000	10,181,000	14,495
Totals	60,700,000	50,223,000	121,344

Source: UNRRA Headquarters, Washington.

Food

In almost every month of 1946, food supplies made up the bulk of UNRRA's shipments to the B.S.S.R. As at the end of January they represented 78 per cent. of the tonnage and 55 per cent. of the value of all shipments. Largest items were (by volume) surplus army rations (36,000 tons up to January 31); 23,000 tons of fish, meat, and meat products, including a popular canned meat mixture known as tushonka; nearly 20,000 tons of dairy products, fats, oils, and soap; and 10,598 tons of pulses. A small amount of grain, soups, and beverages made up the remainder. It will be noted that no sugar, fruits, vegetables, or animal feed were included in the UNRRA shipments.

Early observations by UNRRA Mission members confirmed that all food supplies were being equitably distributed by the Byelorussian Government

648 to the people in greatest need. Throughout the republic in ration stores, children's homes, hospitals, and rural communities, UNRRA food furnished the greater part of the Byelorussian diet in 1946, apart from domestically produced cereals and bread.

Clothing

511 In June 1946 the UNRRA Mission described the urgent need of the Byelorussians for clothing in these words: "The need for clothing is obviously acute. Most people are wearing old, patched up, and ragged clothes. At least half the urban residents seen on the streets and considerably more rural people are going barefoot. Those who have shoes to wear endeavour as much as possible to economize on shoe leather, and it is a common sight to see people walk barefoot where the road or street is smooth, meanwhile carrying their shoes slung over the shoulder ready for use when the road gets rough and rocky. At three factories visited, about half the workers were barefoot, and the remainder were wearing chiefly canvas shoes in poor condition...At the children's homes visited, the children as a rule were sleeping two in a single bed, narrow army-style cots, because of the shortage of blankets and bed linen."

648 The following table of clothing shipments to January 31, 1947, shows that finished footwear and shoe leather, and raw wool and woollen textiles formed a large part of the clothing programme for the U.S.S.R.

TABLE XIII

UNRRA Shipments of Clothing to Byelorussia up to January 31, 1947

	Thousand U.S. dollars	Gross long tons
Finished clothing	368	222
Blankets and comforters	252	139
Cotton textiles	278	154
Woollen textiles	1,288	524
Raw wool	1,134	1,244
Footwear	2,446	1,688
Upper leather	380	173
Sole leather	558	773
Miscellaneous textiles	80	58
Miscellaneous footwear	163	366
Unclassified	62	-
Totals	7,009	5,346

Source: UNRRA Headquarters, Washington.

To certain classes of priority consumers for example, war orphans in children's homes, widowed mothers, war invalids, and factory workers,

●648 UNRRA clothing and contributed clothing are distributed free. The local soviet in each instance prepares a list of persons eligible to receive such clothing. Otherwise, textiles and shoe leather supplied to Byelorussia under the UNRRA programme are converted into clothing and shoes at local co-operatives, or artels, which perform an important role in the production of consumers' goods in the Republic.

474 295 Typical of the producer co-operatives engaged in processing UNRRA-supplied textiles in the Novy Put Clothing Artel in Minsk which UNRRA Mission observers visited in November 1946. At this artel, garments were being made for war orphans cared for in children's homes. The finished garments were then distributed free of charge to the children, the government paying the artel for the cost of manufacture only.

Orders for the manufacture of clothing at this artel can be placed by organizations or by individuals; and as a general rule, the customer supplies his own materials and pays the artel only the established production cost. On orders placed by individuals, the production prices are, for a child's winter coat, 75 roubles,[1] for a woman's winter coat, 275 roubles, and for a man's winter coat, 250 roubles. Men's jackets are manufactured for 85 roubles, and trousers, for 45. Orders placed by organizations or wholesale outlets receive a 20 per cent. reduction on this scale.

The artel is organized on a co-operative profit-sharing basis. Its members are the workers employed in its shops and offices. In addition to their share in the artel's annual income, the member-workers are also paid regular wages for work performed. The monthly earnings of the employees in this artel were said to average 500 roubles. Earnings as high as 2,000 roubles a month were cited for cutters, but the majority of skilled workers earn from 600 to 1,200 roubles montly.

The artel "Novy Put" was first organized in 1928, during the first Five Year Plan. Before the German invasion in 1941, it had a membership of 400 workers, and in addition to the main establishment, it had four branches in various districts of Minsk. The membership, composed largely of Jews, suffered a very high casualty rate during the war; 90 per cent. were said to have perished at the hand of the Germans. In July 1944, shortly after the liberation of Minsk, the artel was reorganized; and it has been steadily growing both in membership and in output. By July 1, 1946, it had 110 workers.

The shoe artels are organized along the same general pattern as the clothing artels. In November 1946 the Red Shoemaker artel in Minsk was turning out a thousand pairs of workers' shoes and three thousand pairs of children's shoes per month.[2] The present membership

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1 5.40 roubles equal one U.S. dollar; 21.36 roubles equal one pound sterling.

2 UNRRA Mission to Byelorussia, Minsk.

295 is 70 workers, who are also share-holders, receiving 20 per cent. of
474 the annual income in addition to regular wages for work performed.

Before the war the "Red Shoemaker" artel was situated in a different part of the city. The production process was then entirely mechanized, and the membership consisted of 300 workers. The plant was demolished by the Germans during the war; and the present artel was organized in 1945 when five pre-war members returned to Minsk, following the liberation. At present there is practically no machinery in the artel, and shoes are being turned out by hand.

Medical Supplies: General Health

727 In relation to the vast destruction of Byelorussian medical facilities during the war, the UNRRA medical programme of just over one million dollars is a drop in a bucket. According to official Soviet estimates, the Germans in Byelorussia "ruined and plundered 1,136 hospitals, clinics, and dispensaries," which represented 75 per cent. of all hospitals and almost 100 per cent. of the medical supplies and equipment of the Republic. The damage has been calculated at 600 million roubles (about 120 million dollars).

164 Byelorussian officials today say that the general health of the population is below pre-war standards; but there are no alarming epidemics. Infant mortality is higher than in 1940; and tuberculosis, which increased markedly during the war, is still a serious problem, especially among returned war prisoners, partisans, and former "slave labourers". Typhus, which flared up during the German occupation, still occurs sporadically; and malaria, which spread rapidly during the war when no treatment was available, is still widely prevalent, but is being gradually reduced by the restoration of swamp drainage and mosquito control projects.

146 The most general problem is perhaps malnutrition; and because of the food shortages, scurvy, rickets, and anaemia are prevalent. Children are small for their age; and the adult population, as might be expected in the absence of adequate food, clothing, and shelter, is not in optimum health.

UNRRA Shipments

● 648 Up to January 31, 1947, nearly 70 per cent. of the UNRRA medical
742 programme for Byelorussia had been fulfilled; 163 gross long tons of drugs and equipment had been shipped. The largest single item of the medical programme is a penicillin plant, parts of which began to arrive in the U.S.S.R. in December 1946. In connection with the plant, the Byelorussian Government has designated a penicillin trainee to study penicillin production in Canada. A specialist hired by UNRRA is to aid in assembling the plant and in training other Byelorussian technicians in the production of the drug. The Byelorussian Government has expressed interest in using the same plant for the production of streptomycin.

648 742 Apart from the penicillin plant, other big items in the UNRRA medical programme include electrocardiographs, X-ray machines and film, and artificial limb manufacturing equipment. Drug requirements have involved the procurement of quinine and, as a substitute, atabrine. By the end of January 1947, slightly less than one metric ton of atabrine had been shipped.

743 648 Not the least of UNRRA's contribution to Byelorussian health has been the soap supplies furnished. In 1946 the only soap available in the hospitals and sanitoria (and this means generally the only soap available anywhere), came from UNRRA sources. This was also true of a large part of the diet of patients, which came from UNRRA food supplies; and of blankets and bedding, which were distributed to hospitals and children's homes.

Still among the urgent requirements in Byelorussian hospitals are beds and bedding, laboratory equipment - including more X-ray machines, microscopes, stains and medea, drugs, and lamps - furniture, kitchen equipment, food, and soap.

Agricultural Rehabilitation Supplies

648 241 UNRRA agricultural rehabilitation supplies began to arrive in the B.S.S.R. in February 1946 and consisted almost entirely of seeds. At the end of July the Byelorussian Government acknowledged receipt of 5,300 tons of vegetable and other seeds, which were estimated to be sufficient for planting from half a million to 600,000 hectares; and since favourable weather permitted late sowing, less than a thousand tons had to be held over for use in 1947. On all the farms visited by the UNRRA Mission to Byelorussia, the vegetable, clover, vetch, timothy and other grass crops had been started fron UNRRA seed.

Besides seeds - an important contribution toward increased food supplies - UNRRA has shipped fishing equipment, food processing equipment, and farm machinery - chiefly tractors. Deliveries of the latter, however, were heartbreakingly slow; and it was only in December 1946 that the first 221 UNRRA tractors arrived. The difficulty of procuring tractors has been one of the greatest obstacles to farm recovery in Byelorussia. The Mission estimated that had UNRRA tractors been available before August 1946, grain cultivation and production would have increased by 500 hectares and 500 tons for each tractor delivered.

Altogether, UNRRA plans to furnish over 800 tractors to the B.S.S.R.

648 Industrial Rehabilitation Supplies

Shipments of industrial supplies up to January 31, 1947, amounted to 14,495 gross long tons valued at 10,081,000 dollars. Largest items were public utilities equipment (power generators, pipe for gas and water mains, etc.) and raw materials, chemicals and engineering stores. The following table shows the shipments by value as well as by tonnage.

TABLE XIV

UNRRA Shipments of Industrial Rehabilitation Supplies to Byelorussia up to January 31, 1947

• 648

	Thousand U.S. dollars	Gross long tons
Transport and telecommunication	206	389
Public utilities	4,215	5,995
Building repair equipment	1,869	1,888
Mining and quarrying equipment	473	600
Machine repair equipment	811	274
Miscellaneous consumer goods	79	25
Materials, chemicals, engineering stores	2,433	5,173
Unclassified	95	151
Totals	10,181	14,495

Source: UNRRA Headquarters, Washington.

The first of these supplies arrived in Byelorussia during February and March 1946, and consisted of 3,000 tons of metals, tarpaulin, and rubber. A number of small locomotives for use in the peat and lumbering industries also arrived during the early months, as well as nine power stations and some engineering equipment, which were received in the second quarter of 1946. These first power stations have been followed by others; and by the end of October last year, 30 units with a total capacity of 8,400 kilowatts had been received. Altogether, UNRRA planned to furnish electric generating capacity of 18,000 kilowatts in 65 units, ranging from small 15 kilowatt army surplus generator sets to two 2,500 kilowatt steam power stations.

Protocol Supplies

A large part of the industrial rehabilitation programme for Byelorussia has consisted of so-called "protocol" supplies - that is, certain items of industrial machinery and equipment which the United Kingdom, in a previous trande agreement, had contracted to furnish to the Soviet Union. After UNRRA assumed responsibility in the Ukraine and Byelorussia, negotiations commenced for the transfer of this equipment through UNRRA. About the middle of 1946 it was concluded that UNRRA would take over and deliver these "protocol" supplies as part of the industrial rehabilitation programme for these two Republics. Similarly, UNRRA became financially responsible for these protocol supplies which had already been delivered by the United Kingdom to Byelorussia and the Ukraine.

•648 By March 1, 1947, protocol supplies already dispatched to the B.S.S.R. amounted to over 3,881,000 dollars, and remaining shipments, to 132,400 dollars. Included in these supplies are power stations, pumps, telephone equipment, cranes and hoists, and electrical equipment.

U.S. Army Surplus Equipment (Surprop)

A second large share of Byelorussia's industrial equipment was acquired by UNRRA from U.S. Army Surpluses (Surprop) in Europe and the United Kingdom. The most important part of the equipment was approximately a million dollars' worth of heavy construction machinery selected from two depots in the United Kingdom, which UNRRA had purchased in their entirety. It was intended to use this equipment in clearing up the rubble and otherwise assisting the reconstruction of Byelorussian cities. The first shipments of surprop supplies for Byelorussia arrived in August 1946, and consisted of 45 two-and-a-half-ton trucks shipped from Marseilles. The government informed the UNRRA Mission that only eight of the 45 trucks were in good operating order; the rest were in very poor condition, and lacked essential parts. Inspection of the trucks by the Mission industrail specialist verified this report.

Inspection of further shipments which arrived in September revealed that they were in no better condition; and because technical manuals and spare parts were lacking, local repairs proved almost impossible. The surprop situation has since been made easier by the procurement of technical manuals from one of the depots in the United Kingdom. Later shipments have been inspected prior to loading, and the procurement of necessary spare parts initiated in the United States.

Distribution of UNRRA Supplies

UNRRA supplies for Byelorussia are handed over to the government at the port of entry, and the government is then responsible for arranging distribution. Like most other countries receiving UNRRA help, the Byelorussian Government has established a special organization to supervise the reception, warehousing, and distribution of all UNRRA goods received. Headed by Mr. Ivan S. Bylinsky, the Administration of UNRRA Supplies works in close liaison with the various Ministries of the Byelorussian Government and with the UNRRA Mission.

Most UNRRA shipments for both the Ukraine and Byelorussia have arrived mainly through the port of Odessa; and since early 1946 an UNRRA officer has been stationed there to handle problems connected with delivery. Before an UNRRA shipment comes in, the authorities at Odessa are notified of the ship's name, its expected time of arrival, and the nature of the cargo. As soon as possible after the ship lands, discharging of cargo begins. Stevedoring labour is supplied by the Port Commander's service organization, Inflot", which also furnishes checkers to work in the ship's hold and on the docks, counting the supplies and reporting any damaged-goods. As the cargo is unloaded, perishable items are placed in warehouses on the docks, and seeds in

•648 a warehouse in the suburbs of Odessa. Packaged goods, such as canned meat, army rations, and juices, are piled on the dock at shipside and finally into freight cars.

Directives for the distribution of the supplies are issued by the UNRRA Supplies Administration in accordance with a general plan embracing the whole supply programme. As soon as the government learns of the prospective arrival of the ship, specific directions are given, so that immediately upon the loading of the freight cars, the goods start off to their ultimate destinations.

Many of the items - such as metals and contributed clothing, which require processing or sorting - are concentrated in Minsk before final disposition. Since at present Byelorussia has no facilities for processing certain raw materials, these are sent to factories in other parts of the U.S.S.R. under contracts which provide for the return to Byelorussia of finished products such as transmission cables, trolley wires, babbitt bearings, etc. The same is true with respect to some of the shipments of raw wool, which were sent to mills in Moscow or Ivanov to be woven into cloth.

In every instance, the supplies are distributed to the neediest sections of the Republic, either free of charge, or by sale to ration card holders. UNRRA food supplies, for example, are distributed in four ways: (a) sales to the general public through government ration stores; (b) sales to certain categories of consumers through special outlets, including stores attached to factories for factory workers, and special stores for pregnant women, nursing mothers, and invalids; (c) factory cafeterias where workers may purchase low-cost meals; and (d) free distribution through hospitals, children's homes, and local village soviets in rural areas most heavily devastated by the war.

In 1946 somewhat less than half the UNRRA foodstuffs were distributed free to hospitals, schools, invalids' homes, etc., and the rest was sold through ration stores. UNRRA clothing is sold through retail outlets, or in factory stores; and contributed clothing is distributed free to hospitals, schools, and other priority consumers. Medical supplies are transferred gratis to hospitals and invalids' homes. Industrial and agricultural supplies, if capital equipment, are distributed free to collectives and other organizations; and if consumable supplies, such as metals and other raw materials, are sold. Thus industries buy the raw materials, but receive the use of locomotives and generators free of charge.

In rural localities, food and consumer goods are distributed through the local Salpo (rural consumers' co-operative society). In every rural raion soviet (which may embrace a dozen or more collective farm villages), there is a Salpo distributing agency, the management of which is elected by the local consumer shareholders. In the sections which had suffered greatest destruction, collective farms received UNRRA supplies - mostly seeds and army rations - free through the local Salpo. About half the more than 5,000 tons of UNRRA-supplied seeds were distributed free to Byelorussian farms.

9: Amer. Russ. Inst. (no date) 1950 RC1 Belorussia RC1
[Constitution as of July, 1947]

Art. 16a. The Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic has its own Republican military formations.

Art. 16b. The Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic has the right to enter into direct relations with foreign states and to conclude agreements and exchange diplomatic and consular representatives with them.

Art. 17. The laws of the USSR are binding within the territory of the Belorussian SSR.

Art. 18. Every citizen of the Belorussian SSR is a citizen of the USSR.

Citizens of all other Union Republics enjoy on the territory of the Belorussian SSR equal rights with citizens of the Belorussian SSR.

Art. 19. The jurisdiction of the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, as represented by its higher organs of state power and organs of state administration, embraces:

a) Adoption of the Constitution of the Belorussian SSR and control over its observance;

b) Establishment of the boundaries, and of the division into districts, of regions; submission of the formation of new regions constituting part of the Belorussian SSR to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR for confirmation;

c) Legislation of the Belorussian SSR;

d) Maintenance of public order and safeguarding the rights of citizens;

e) Approval of the national-economic plan of the Belorussian SSR;

f) Approval of the state budget of the Belorussian SSR and of the report on its fulfilment;

g) Determination of state and local taxes, imposts and non-tax revenues in conformity with the laws of the USSR; direction of the fulfilment of the local budgets of the regions;

h) Direction of insurance and savings;

i) Administration of the banks, industrial, agricultural and trading enterprises and organisations subordinate to the Republic, as well as direction of local industry;

j) Control and superintendence of the condition and administration of enterprises subordinate to the Union;

k) Establishment of the procedure governing the use of land, mineral wealth, forests and waters;

l) Direction of dwelling houses and the municipal economy, dwelling house construction and the modernisation of cities and other inhabited places;

m) Road building; direction of local transport and communications;

n) Labour legislation;

o) Direction of social maintenance;

p) Direction of elementary, secondary and higher education;

q) Direction of the cultural, educational and scientific organisations and institutions of the Belorussian SSR, and administration of the cultural, educational and scientific organisations and institutions of all-Republican importance;

r) Direction of public health and administration of public health institutions of Republican importance;

s) Direction and organisation of physical culture and sports;

t) Organisation of the judicial organs of the Belorussian SSR;

u) Granting the rights of citizenship of the Belorussian SSR;

v) Amnesty and pardon of citizens convicted by judicial organs of